

Remarks

Claims 1-17 were pending. Claims 1 and 10 have been amended. No claims have been added or cancelled. Thus claims 1-17 are subject to continued examination.

Anticipation/Obviousness Rejections

Claims 1-3, 8-11, and 16-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by or in the alternative under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Veiga et al. (US 6,239,046). Continued rejection on these grounds is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested.

A claim is anticipated only if each and every element as set forth in the claim is found, either expressly or inherently described, in a single prior art reference. The identical invention must be shown in as complete detail as is contained in the claim (MPEP § 2131). In order to establish a *prima facie* case of obviousness there must be some suggestion or motivation that would lead to the claimed invention. The suggestion or motivation may derive from the references themselves or from the knowledge generally available to those of skill in the art. In addition, all the claim limitations must be taught or suggested by the prior art (MPEP § 2142). Applicants respectfully submit that these standards are not met by the cited art with regard to the claims as now presented.

Veiga et al. teaches a coated textile fabric for use in an airbag. As best understood, the Examiner's position is that the polyurethane coating is equivalent to the polyurethane film utilized in the instant invention. Applicants respectfully disagree. The polyurethane layer disclosed in Veiga is coated onto the upper or top surface 12 of the fabric substrate 10. This polyurethane layer is referred to as a prime coat or adhesive coat, which serves to adhesively bond the filaments of the textile substrate so they do not comb or unravel (Col. 2, lines 44-48). An elastomeric polysiloxane layer 16 is then coated onto the surface of the polyurethane layer 14 in overlying relationship thereto (Col. 3, lines 4-6). It appears that the polysiloxane layer provides the enhanced air retention capabilities.

Applicants respectfully submit that a polyurethane coating on a porous air bag especially at low coating weight is not equivalent to a laminated film. It is difficult to form a gas tight continuous coating on a porous fabric substrate at low coating weights. The coating tends to flow into the yarn interstices and voids which results in uneven distribution of coating material across the fabric surface. A non-uniform and discontinuous coating will cause air leakage through the coated fabric especially in the curtain type air bags where there is much higher pressure. Curtain type airbags also have stringent leakage requirements and applicants do not believe that an airbag coated solely with polyurethane at the low coating weights claimed could meet these requirements or the leak-down time after inflation limitation delineated in claim 1. In contrast, the pre-cast polyurethane film of the instant invention provides a substantially uniform laminated film layer on the porous airbag fabric which

provides a greatly enhanced air seal. In conclusion, Veiga provides no suggestion or motivation for the utilization of film lamination as opposed to coating methods. Consequently, applicants respectfully submit that neither the requirements of anticipation or *prima facie* obviousness have been satisfied.

Claims 1-17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) as being anticipated by or in the alternative under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being obvious over Moriwaki et al. (US 5,989,660). Continued rejection on these grounds is respectfully traversed and reconsideration is requested.

Moriwaki discloses an airbag fabric coated with a thermoplastic synthetic resin of 10 μm or less in average thickness (Abstract). As best understood, the Examiner takes the position that this coated fabric is equivalent to the film laminated fabric of the instant invention. As discussed previously, Applicants strongly assert that this is not the case. Low weight coating of a fibrous substrate does not result in a substantially uniform laminated film layer as is required by the amended claims. Rather, the covering layer is adhered to a surface of a fibrous substrate such that interstices between the fibers are filled with resin (Col. 2, lines 14-16). Furthermore, Moriwaki teaches a coating of 10 mm or less in average thickness (Col. 5, line 2, emphasis added), strongly suggesting that non-uniformity of thickness has led to the necessity of reporting average thicknesses. In contrast, the film of the instant invention is of a uniform thickness, resulting in substantially uniform film laminated

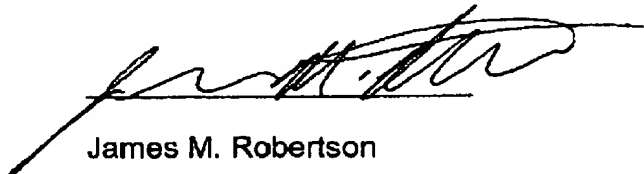
fabric. Consequently, Applicants request that the rejections based on Moriwaki should not be maintained.

Conclusion:

For the reasons set forth above, it is respectfully submitted that all claims now stand in condition for allowance. Should any issues remain after consideration of this Amendment and accompanying Remarks, the Examiner is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned in the hope that any such issue may be promptly and satisfactorily resolved.

In the event that there are additional fees associated with the submission of these papers (including extension of time fees), authorization is hereby provided to withdraw such fees from Deposit Account No. 50-1424.

Respectfully submitted,



James M. Robertson
Registration No. 36,905
(864) 583-0030 (phone)
(864) 583-0002 (FAX)